

including surgery, obstetrics, and the operating room. At the time of her retirement, Ms. Deamos was employed in the sterile central supply, the part of the hospital that provides sterile processing for surgical instruments and equipment. A standout employee during her 34 years, she was named Lafayette Regional Health Center Employee of the Year in 1967 and given the Smile Award, recognizing her cheery attitude, in 1997.

Maxine Deamos is an outstanding citizen of the Lexington community, and her wonderful personality will be missed by all at Lexington Regional Health Center. During her quieter times, Ms. Deamos plans to travel, work on her crafts, and spend time with her grandchildren. Mr. Speaker, I am sure that our colleagues join me in recognition of this outstanding Missourian.

A TRIBUTE TO LULAC

HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 4, 1999

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor one of the most influential Hispanic civil rights organizations in the United States. The League of United Latin American Citizens is celebrating its 70th anniversary of service to the Latino community.

In 1929 LULAC was formed in Corpus Christi, TX. Formed as a grassroots self-help organization, LULAC has a distinguished record of fighting for Hispanic education, employment and civil rights. Today, LULAC's 250,000 members make it the largest Hispanic organization in the U.S. Its 600 councils nationwide have been significant in empowering Latino communities in Texas, New Mexico, California, Florida, Washington, DC and New York.

Education has always been a chief priority for LULAC, providing more than half a million dollars in scholarships for Latino students. LULAC National Educational Service Centers serve over 18,000 students with counseling and dropout prevention programs. At the same time, its commitment to the assurance of equal access has been fundamental in LULAC's fight for affirmative action and women's rights.

In the Hispanic business community, LULAC has been important in furnishing training and management expertise, while also providing support for economic development. LULAC has also made great strides in combating Hispanic unemployment through the development of programs like SER-Jobs for Progress and Vocational Training Centers.

I am proud to represent the city of Santa Ana, which is the home of the first LULAC council in California. Its work in my community is indispensable. In fact, LULAC was responsible for desegregating Orange County Schools in 1946 with *Mendez v. Westminster School District*.

I congratulate LULAC for its 70 years of service to Hispanics in the United States. Its outstanding work should be an inspiration to other Latino leaders and elected officials, especially those here in Congress. I applaud LULAC's on its anniversary, and give thanks for all its good work.

THE PUBLIC SCHOOL MODERNIZATION ACT

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 4, 1999

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1660, the Public School Modernization Act. It is time for Congress to take action and make an investment in the future of America, our children. This legislation will provide significant help to local school districts in meeting their needs both to build new classrooms to keep up with skyrocketing school enrollments and to renovate and modernize their existing facilities.

Overall, California alone projects a \$20.1 billion five-year cost for school modernization, including \$11 billion for modernization and technology upgrades of old facilities. These technology upgrades include very basic amenities such as additional electrical outlets, and telephone jacks for internet connection.

Additionally, California will need \$4 billion just to build new facilities to accommodate growing enrollment. California would get just over \$3 billion under the Public School Modernization Act. This bill will provide \$24 billion in interest-free funds for school modernization projects and deserves our support.

According to the Committee for Education Funding, the Republican education agenda is projected to cut over \$3 billion from the Department of Education's budget including a \$1 billion cut from Title I funding, a program aimed at supporting children in poverty. Funding will also be slashed dramatically for Federal Pell Grants and the Head Start Program.

It would be prudent to cut funding for wasteful defense programs, and unnecessary manned space exploration. It is time to make a significant improvement in the education of our children. I urge my colleagues to support HR 1606. Our children's future depends on it.

A DARK CHAPTER IN OUR NATION'S HISTORY

HON. ROBERT WEXLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 4, 1999

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Speaker, I am here to support Italian Americans who were singled out during World War II as enemy aliens of the United States. Unfortunately, like many Japanese Americans who were persecuted during World War II, over 600,000 Italian Americans were subjected to harsh treatment by the American government, including being evicted from their homes and subjected to strict curfews. Hundreds of Italian Americans were sent to internment camps.

It is unconscionable that these hard working Americans were denied fundamental human rights and freedoms. Like many other ethnic communities in the United States, Italian Americans fought bravely in World War II and played a major role in defeating the Axis powers. However, many Italian Americans who remained in the United States during World War II faced discrimination including the families of soldiers who were injured or killed in Europe and in the Pacific.

I believe that it is incumbent upon the President and the United States government to acknowledge this dark chapter of our nation's history. Italian Americans who were victims of persecution are entitled to no less, and America needs to acknowledge the truth. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2442.

INTRODUCTION OF THE ELECTRONIC BENEFIT TRANSFER INTEROPERABILITY AND PORTABILITY ACT OF 1999

HON. BOB GOODLATTE

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 4, 1999

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, today I introduced the Electronic Benefit Transfer Interoperability and Portability Act of 1999. The sole focus of the bill is to allow food stamp beneficiaries the ability to redeem their benefits in any eligible store regardless of location. Beneficiaries had this ability under the old paper food stamp system but lost it as states migrated to an electronic benefits transfer system.

Under the old paper food stamp system, recipients could redeem their food coupons in any authorized food store anywhere in the country. For example, a food stamp recipient living in Bath County, VA could use their food stamps in their favorite grocery store even if it happened to be in West Virginia. Similarly, a recipient living in Tennessee could visit their Mother in Virginia and purchase food for their children while away from home. Unfortunately, as we move to electronic delivery of benefits, this is currently not the case. My bill provides for the portability of food assistance benefits and allows food stamp recipients the flexibility of shopping at locations that they choose.

Across the country we are finding that people live in one state and shop in another. This cross border shopping is conducted for a variety of reasons. One of them is convenience, another is the cost of goods. The supermarket industry is a very competitive industry. Every week stores advertise specials in newspaper ads across the country. People not only shop at locations convenient to them but also shop around for the best prices. Customers paying with every type of tender except EBT have the flexibility to shop where they choose. Why shouldn't recipients of food assistance benefits be allowed to stretch their dollars in the same way that other consumers do, without regard to state borders?

EBT portability is simply allowing recipients of benefits under the food stamp program to redeem those benefits without regard to state borders at the stores they choose. In addition to portability, my legislation allows for the interoperability of EBT transactions. Interoperability can be simply defined as the ability of various computers involved in authorizing, routing and settling an EBT transaction to talk to each other.

I offered a Sense of the Congress Amendment to the Welfare Reform bill that Congress passed in 1996. My amendment urged states to work together to achieve a seamless system of food stamp benefit redemption. States did a decent job considering the circumstances. They are now asking for an extra nudge to realize the goal of my earlier amendment.